

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

March 19, 2002      LB 479

Hudkins, and I feel that this is a situation where the physical landscape has changed to such an extent that it does not make sense for us to commit at this moment in time to several million dollars more in expenditures at the state level until we have resolved the budget crisis in front of us. We are in a situation where we're cutting back on state agencies, we're cutting back on local governments some more, we're cutting back on aid to individuals. We're cutting back everywhere and you will soon see this afternoon the lobby filled with all of the people who are unhappy about the cuts that have been made, and I'm sure many of you are unhappy with some of the cuts that were made. But I don't understand how the public is going to understand how the state is, at the time that it's doing all of this, going to increase its budget by several million dollars a year. It just is something that needs to be put off and considered next year and the year after, and at such times when there is a realistic possibility that we might put funding into this measure. Now, the committee amendment puts the effective date off until July 2003; also expands the time from 48 hours to 72 hours. Obviously, the committee was trying to accommodate this and I appreciate that. But putting the effective date off till July of 2003 is not going to resolve the problem in this case and, in my opinion, I have always felt that that was bad public policy to put the effective date of A bills off for a year or two so that you didn't have to compete with those things that were there for funding this year. We used to do that from time to time but it's very bad policy, because in a way what it does is it puts one of the last bills on this year's legislative priority list, you know, a bill that can't compete with the other bills for funding in this particular year, what it does is take that last bill for this legislative session, puts it into statute and, therefore, it becomes the first priority, effectively, in a future legislative session. But think about that. Should you take away from a future Legislature the ability to put this matter in the pool of things to be funded and to consider it again in that future year among other things to be funded? Should you put a bill that could not compete this year first on the list for some future year and bind that Legislature, for all practical purposes, to funding it? I think that makes no sense and is bad legislative policy. If we can't fund it in this biennium, we should not fund it and it should